This interview with Tom Angelripper of Sodom was conducted in October 2001 during the promotional campaign for the album M-16. Originally, it aired exclusively on the metal radio show GG Generation on Svid Radio. I recently came across the old tape and decided it deserved a proper transcript, which you can read below. The second part contains the Croatian version of the same interview. Special thanks to Björn from SPV/Steamhammer for kindly providing promotional photos from that era!

Tom, M-16 is the title of your new album. How happy are you with the final result, and what have the early reactions from fans and the media been like?

It is one of the best we have done so far, you know. I get a lot of reactions. I can read them on homepages and I also get some critiques from magazines. It's always positive. Now we have to see how well it runs. We are going into the Media Control charts this week, and I think it's selling really well. But we'll see what happens. I do a lot of interviews and a lot of promotion, so it needs 2 or 3 months before I can say exactly how it goes. The record company has to wait, because they bring it out in record stores and maybe after one month there are a lot coming back. So we cannot say exactly how much we sell at this time. But I'm really satisfied and I hope it's going to be successful, because the record company brings it out worldwide. That's a big difference between SPV, Drakkar, and other companies. Worldwide release is really important, because Sodom fans are worldwide, you know.

Since you mentioned Drakkar and SPV, I'd like to touch on something. It seems that almost every metal band has left Drakkar, except Nightwish. Do you know the real reason why? For example, U.D.O., Grave Digger, and now Sodom.

Yeah, also Rage and Kreator were gone, you know. I think the most important problem is because the chief of the record company label was Boggi Kopec, and he was also the manager of all the bands. We worked a lot of years together with him, but now he's always in conflict. You cannot be the chief, the label chief, and also the manager of a band, you know. The manager has to fight against the company and try to help the musicians get more money and success. In the last months, Boggi couldn't do it because he is the label chief, so he talked to the bands and suggested it's better for them to find a new record company. He cannot give 100% for every band. He cannot support or promote all of them, you know. That was my idea to go back to SPV because of their big catalogue. SPV was really interested in the new Sodom album, and I think we got a good deal, so I'm really satisfied. The same happened to Kreator and Rage, you know, and I think both bands are going to SPV.

Okay, now that you're back with SPV and you said you're really satisfied with M-16, could you give us a brief description of the album, maybe song by song, if that's not a problem?

Oh, yes, I can. I just don't want to describe the lyrics. That's the problem with the lyrics. You have to find out yourself all the time, you know. I can say a lot of people think M-16 is about the Vietnam War, but that's not right. You have to read between the lines, and you have to read the lyrics, and you will find out this album is an anti-war album. And there is a message in every song: please stop the war. I just want to describe in the lyrics and in the songs how bad the war is, that's my opinion. But you find no political opinion in the songs. It's very important to say that my opinion is that mankind living on this earth cannot live without any war. A lot of people ask me why we bring it out now, after what happened to the World Trade Center and New York, all the Afghanistan stuff, you know. I never mind because we finished the production and the cover before it happened in New York. And I want to shock people when they see the cover, I want to shock people with the lyrics. And, for example, there are a lot of Vietnam War movies, you know, Apocalypse Now and Full Metal Jacket. These are anti-war movies, and we do it in another way, we just do the music, you know, and we want to stop the war. But I want to describe every lyric, the music, and all. My favorite songs are definitely I Am The War, Among The Weirdcong, and Napalm In The Morning. This is also important to say: when we arranged the new songs for the album, it was important to make better refrains, better choruses. When you listen to the M-16 album, you listen once and twice and never forget. The songs like M-16, Marines, Genocide, Lady Injection are really classics, you know. And next, when we go on tour, I think we have to play a lot of songs from M-16 live. We rehearsed the new songs and arranged them in the rehearsal room. We had a lot more songs, so we just took the songs we really like. And the bad songs we don't bring on a new album.

I also interviewed Mille Petrozza two months ago, and he told me that you'll be touring together - three of the best German thrash metal bands of all time: Destruction, Sodom, and Kreator. Is that true, and what do you expect from the tour?

Yeah, what Mille said is true. But I have to also say that in Germany, everybody is talking about the thrash metal revival. Thrash metal is back. I don't take care, because they talk about the thrash metal revival: Destruction reunion, Schmier coming back, Kreator making more albums, more thrashy, more heavy. I never mind. I don't take care, because Sodom is the only band that for 20 years never changed the style, never changed the music, never disappointed fans. We never tried to get commercial. I think Sodom is the most successful underground band in the world. But this tour will be a big chance for Sodom and for each other band. This is the first time in 15 years, or maybe the first time ever, that we are going on stage together for a big tour. This tour is especially designed for the fans in Germany and also in Europe. They get a low-price ticket and see 3 or maybe 4 thrash metal bands. They get a really powerful package. They get 100% thrash metal on stage. They get full energy and full power for four hours. Everybody will be satisfied. It wasn't possible before because in the past… okay, Mille wanted to go his way with Kreator, Destruction had a new singer. Nobody took care, and they were not successful. Now we get more serious. We can talk about everything. That's the thing. Because Schmier, Mille, they are good friends of mine. We can talk about the tour. We also change the headlining position every night when we start the tour. This will be really serious. This will definitely be the best tour next year.

I hope you'll play near Croatia, maybe in Slovenia, Italy, or Austria. Does that mean the tour is still being planned and you don't know yet exactly where you'll be playing?

I think if you check the Sodom and Kreator homepages, you'll find the updated, confirmed shows. I think it's already… the booking is already finished. We'll start at the end of December for 5 weeks. I don't know exactly where we play, I haven't seen the update yet. I have to check it out. I think we'll play all over Europe, but in 5 weeks you cannot play everywhere. After these 5 weeks, we have a break for 2 weeks, and maybe the tour will continue in February or

March. We want to play everywhere where the people are. If somebody is interested in this package, in the tour or in the concert, we'll go, that's no problem. But these 5 weeks are now confirmed, and I think we need a break after this..

Let's talk about something very interesting: the limited edition of your previous album, Code Red, which includes Homage to the Gods, a tribute to Sodom as a bonus CD. How did that come together, and what do you think about it?

Well, what I think about tribute albums...they usually come from record companies to make money - just a commercial thing. The Tribute to Sodom album, we give it for free. You get two CDs for the price of one. The idea came because a lot of bands asked me - they have covered Sodom songs, including big or famous bands like Cradle of Filth, Dimmu Borgir, and others. They asked me to make Sodom covers, and they wanted to collect them. We wanted to collect it all in just one sampler. That makes me really glad. I'm really proud of this sampler. A lot of bands are really influenced, inspired by old Sodom material. It was really funny to see how other bands play Sodom songs. I think there are really good songs, also some bad songs, but all the bands try to keep the Sodom spirit from the 80s alive. And that makes me really glad. I'm also thinking about a second tribute album, Tribute to Sodom, because we have a lot of other good songs and a lot of bands who want to do it. But we don't want to make money. We just want to give it for free to the fans who are really interested in all the Sodom stuff.

Since we're talking about tribute albums, I recently listened to Tribute to Accept, and you performed I'm a Rebel. Can you tell me a bit about that?

On the Tribute to Accept we played I'm a Rebel because I like the old Accept music, and they asked me, "Come on, you have to do it, you have to do it." The first thing we wanted to cover was Fast as a Shark, but it was already taken, another band had done it. So the only song we could do was I'm a Rebel, and we recorded it during the Code Red session, when we recorded the last Sodom album, Code Red. That was really funny to do. I really like Accept, but just the old Accept classics. I have no problem - we make tributes to any other band they want us to.

I imagine it's even more special when you're a fan of the band's music, like with Accept in this case?

Absolutely. I think The Restless and Wild is one of the best albums ever - a real metal classic. I think there are maybe 10 or 20 true metal classic albums, and Accept, The Restless and Wild,

is definitely one of them. I like Udo Dirkschneider, but I don't like his solo project, U.D.O. - it's getting commercial, you know. All the time when a band tries to get commercial, I never like it, never like it again. But Accept was a really, really heavy band, you know, a really cool band with heavy guitars and really good musicians. My all-time favorites? I think Accept, The Restless and Wild, is definitely one of them.

Which other bands do you personally enjoy listening to?

There are so many. First, I have to say I don't like the new metal bands coming out every month. In Germany, hundreds of new bands are coming out. I never mind, I don't take care. I like the all-time classics. When I started listening to music, I started with Deep Purple, Rainbow, The Who, you know, really rock music. Then came a New Wave Of British Heavy Metal bands I really enjoyed. I like Raven, Exciter from Canada, Venom. I also like a French band, Vulcain. I like Vardis, Tank, you know, Jaguar. There are so many bands that really inspired me. And I think in the 80s, around '85, it was the best metal era ever, you know. That was the best time for me, with so many wonderful albums coming out. I also like Slayer, S.O.D. I like extremely hard music. In my opinion, metal today has to get more aggressive, more extreme. I always miss the spirit and the revolution in the music, you know. When I listened to my music, my mother came into the room - she hated it. She hated the music. Now young boys hear the new Hammerfall album, and even their parents like it. This is commercial. I think metal has to go back more to the underground. Metal has to have something special, you know. But in Germany now, it's too commercial and it's getting too big. Thrash metal never gets commercial. That's really important. But I hope that more fans get interested in thrash metal music, maybe even the new metal fans who only hear power metal, you know. I hope more people go back and say, "Oh, thrash metal music, this is 100% pure metal, without any influences, without any commercial stuff in it". That's my dream, that more people like thrash metal music. But it's not the way now. I think in Germany, the true metal bands are really big, they are the biggest bands in the metal scene. But I hope people go back and say, "Oh, thrash metal is the best way to do metal music. It's really rough, really extreme music, and we're going to like it", you know. That's my dream. I hope that when we go on tour, a lot of people will be interested and say, "Oh, come on, let's go to the Sodom, Destruction, Kreator concert. I want to see what these bands are doing on stage", you know.

Okay, and moving away from thrash metal, you also have a project called Onkel Tom, which is more punk-oriented. What can you tell me about this project? When will you release a new album, and what can fans expect?

Yeah, Onkel Tom is just a side project, you know. You never see it live, but if we do go on stage, we play live in Germany and everybody comes up on stage. Onkel Tom is specially designed for the fans, you know. The fans stand with me on stage, drinking beer, headbanging, and singing the German beer-drinking songs, you know. It's really funny to do, something really special. But this year, when I signed a contract with SPV for the Sodom album, I didn't sign for Onkel Tom. They said, okay, first I have to give everything this year for Sodom, and I want to bring out a new Onkel Tom next year, but I have no deal at the moment. I'm sure that when I finish production for the new Onkel Tom, I will find a deal, there will be no problem, you know. But for now, I just want to concentrate on the new Sodom tour and the next Sodom album, and I'll bring out Onkel Tom stuff next year. It's just a funny side project, and it's really successful in Germany - a lot of people like it there.

Now that we have more time, here's how the radio show will work: the first part will cover the new album and your interview, and the second part will focus on Sodom's history, biography, and past albums. If that's okay, could you share some comments on the band's career?

Ok, no problem.

So, we can begin with the early days, starting with the first EP and the debut album, Obsessed by Cruelty.

Ok, yes, what can I say? I think when we founded the band in '81, we couldn't realize at the time that we'd get a record deal. We had one show. It was a black metal night with Venom, and SPV, one of the record companies, saw Sodom on stage. They said, "This is the baddest, loudest band we've ever seen," so we got a deal. This was with Blasphemer on guitar, Witchhunter on drums, and Aggressor. Aggressor left the band, so we tried to find another one and found Destructor to record the Obsessed by Cruelty album. But after that, some of the guitar players went to Kreator, including Destructor. Then we found Frank Blackfire, and this was the first time we had a really good guitar player. It was the first big step to a new Sodom era, starting with Expurse of Sodomy and the full-length Persecution Mania. This was the first "real" Sodom record for me. We also changed the lyrics from black metal style to normal topics - politics, war, and all that. Then it continued, and in this decade, it's important to say that Agent Orange came out, one of the most successful Sodom albums in the world. For me, it wasn't the best album, but it was the right album at the right time.

That was the '80s. Then in 1990 came Better Off Dead, another great album, followed by Tapping the Vein and Get What You Deserve. I think Get What You Deserve is a very unusual album, with a lot of short songs.

I think Better Off Dead was a really good album with Michael Hoffmann on guitars, and he was a really heavy guitar player. I like songs like "An Eye for an Eye" and "Never Healing Wound," real Sodom classics. Then Hoffman went to Brazil, and we found Andy Brings. Tapping the Vein was a really heavy album. And yes, you are right, Get What You Deserve is one of our strangest albums, because it's a completely different style: thrash metal, but more punky, you know. Atomic Steif was on drums, a real speed freak. I like it a lot because it's different from the other Sodom albums. It's something special, really hardcore, really punky, you know. Because I like punk music, I think Get What You Deserve and The Masquerade in

Blood are the heaviest Sodom albums ever. I'm talking just studio records, not live albums, and for me, among the oldest Sodom albums, Get What You Deserve is the most interesting Sodom album ever.

So after that, there was Masquerade in Blood, then the Best Of album, followed by 'Til Death Do Us Unite and Code Red. You've always had a punky side, which is obvious, but Code Red is pure thrash metal. I'd even compare it to Agent Orange, one of my all-time favorite Sodom albums. Would you say Code Red also came out at the perfect place at the perfect time?

Yeah, yeah. The Masquerade in Blood was just one album with another guitar player, Strahli. For me, Masquerade in Blood was one of the heaviest albums ever. This guitar player had a really hardcore style, you know, a really, really heavy album. The production was not so good, it was really bad, but it was still really powerful. Then we found the new lineup with Bobby and Bernemann. 'Til Death Do Us Unite was just the beginning; there were a lot of songs I really liked, like "Frozen Screams," the German song "Schwerter zu Pflugscharen," also punky-style songs like "Polytoximaniac" and "Hanging Judge," really good songs, you know. But Code Red was the first step back to the '80s. A lot of people compared it to Agent Orange, you know - "Sodom is back, more thrashy, this '80s period coming back". I really, really like Code Red. It's a really heavy album, you know. Songs like "What Hell Can Create," "Tombstone," and "The Vice of Killing" are really powerful, real live classics we have to play all the time. And now on M-16, you get a mixture of everything, you know - really powerful songs, but also really good songs. That's very important. You listen to the songs on M-16 once or twice and you'll never forget them. Songs like "Napalm in the Morning," "Marines," "M-16," or "Genocide" are songs you hear once and never forget. They're going to be live classics too. For me, M-16 is the best album in a musical way. Not the heaviest album, but the best album we've done in our career.

What can we expect from Sodom in the future?

I can't really tell you yet. We already have some songs finished for the next album, but I can't talk too much about it. I think it's going to be heavier. Every band always says the next album will be the best one, you know, so we'll see what happens. But I think this lineup is really strong now. The other musicians know exactly what Sodom is about, what the spirit of Sodom is, you know. They say, "Okay Tom, it's your project, it's your band, but we want to support you, we want to help you, we like the music," so we can really work together. Now we're really good friends in this lineup, like a family, and that means we can make 100% pure thrash metal Sodom songs again. So don't be afraid, don't worry, Sodom never gets commercial. Sodom always tries to do better songs in an honest way, you know. So please look forward to the next Sodom album.

Thank you very much for your time and for this interview. To close, could you please share a message for Sodom's fans in Croatia?

There is no special message, but I hope you enjoy the new album and that you're not disappointed. I really hope you come to see us on tour, at a concert, and support us - that's my dream, you know. I'm really excited, and honestly a little nervous, to get back on stage, but I know the fans are waiting for this package. We're doing everything to give 100%, you know, and I hope to see you backstage. You have to know, I'm not a rockstar - after the show, I try

to get outside, make a big party, have some beers with the fans, and have a good time. I'm really looking forward to it, and I'd be really happy to play in your country.

INTERVJU – HRVATSKI PRIJEVOD

Tom, M-16 je naslov vašeg novog albuma. Koliko ste zadovoljni konačnim rezultatom i kakve su prve reakcije fanova i medija?
To je jedan od najboljih albuma koje smo do sada napravili, znaš. Dobivam puno reakcija. Mogu ih čitati na internetskim stranicama, a dobivam i kritike iz časopisa. Uvijek su pozitivne. Sada moramo vidjeti koliko će se dobro prodavati. Ovaj tjedan ulazimo na Media Control ljestvice i mislim da se stvarno jako dobro prodaje. Ali vidjet ćemo što će se dogoditi. Radim puno intervjua i puno promocije, tako da trebaju proći dva ili tri mjeseca prije nego što mogu točno reći kako stvari stoje. Diskografska kuća mora pričekati, jer oni šalju album u prodavaonice ploča i možda se nakon mjesec dana puno primjeraka vrati natrag. Zato trenutačno ne možemo točno reći koliko prodajemo. Ali ja sam stvarno zadovoljan i nadam se da će biti uspješan, jer diskografska kuća ga izdaje diljem svijeta. To je velika razlika između SPV-a, Drakkara i drugih kompanija. Svjetsko izdanje je jako važno, jer fanovi Sodoma su posvuda u svijetu, znaš.

Budući da si spomenuo Drakkar i SPV, htio bih se dotaknuti jedne stvari. Čini se da je gotovo svaki metal bend napustio Drakkar, osim Nightwisha. Znaš li pravi razlog zašto? Na primjer, U.D.O., Grave Digger i sada Sodom.
Da, i Rage i Kreator su također otišli, znaš. Mislim da je najvažniji problem bio taj što je šef izdavačke kuće bio Boggi Kopec, a on je ujedno bio i menadžer svih bendova. Dugo smo godina surađivali s njim, ali sada je stalno u sukobu. Ne možeš biti šef etikete i istovremeno menadžer benda, znaš. Menadžer se mora boriti protiv izdavačke kuće i pokušati pomoći glazbenicima da dobiju više novca i uspjeha. U posljednjim mjesecima Boggi to nije mogao jer je on šef kuće, pa je razgovarao s bendovima i predložio im da bi bilo bolje da pronađu novu diskografsku kuću. Ne može dati 100% svakom bendu. Ne može podržavati i promovirati sve, znaš. Moja ideja je bila vratiti se u SPV zbog njihovog velikog kataloga. SPV je bio jako zainteresiran za novi album Sodoma i mislim da smo dobili dobar ugovor, tako da sam stvarno zadovoljan. Isto se dogodilo i s Kreatorom i Rageom, i mislim da oba benda idu u SPV.

U redu, sada kada ste se vratili u SPV i rekao si da si jako zadovoljan albumom M-16, možeš li nam dati kratak opis istoga, možda pjesmu po pjesmu, ako to nije problem?

Oh, da, mogu. Samo ne želim opisivati tekstove. To je problem s tekstovima. Tekstove morate uvijek sami otkriti, znaš. Mogu reći da puno ljudi misli da je M-16 album o Vijetnamskom ratu, ali to nije točno. Morate čitati između redaka i morate čitati tekstove, i tada ćete shvatiti da je ovaj album antiratni album. I u svakoj pjesmi postoji poruka: molim vas, zaustavite rat. Samo želim kroz tekstove i pjesme opisati koliko je rat loš, to je moje mišljenje. Ali u pjesmama nećete pronaći političko mišljenje. Jako je važno reći da je moje mišljenje da čovječanstvo koje živi na ovoj Zemlji ne može živjeti bez ikakvog rata. Puno ljudi me pita zašto smo album objavili sada, nakon onoga što se dogodilo u Svjetskom trgovačkom centru i u New Yorku, svega onoga s Afganistanom, znaš. Mene to ne brine jer smo produkciju i omot završili prije nego što se to dogodilo u New Yorku. I želim šokirati ljude kada vide omot, želim ih šokirati tekstovima. I, na primjer, postoji puno filmova o Vijetnamskom ratu, znaš, *Apocalypse Now* i *Full Metal Jacket*. To su antiratni filmovi, a mi to radimo na drugi način – mi to radimo kroz glazbu, znaš, i želimo zaustaviti rat. Ali želim opisati svaki tekst, glazbu i sve ostalo. Moje omiljene pjesme su definitivno **I Am the War**, **Among the Weirdcong** i **Napalm in the Morning**. Također je važno reći da nam je, kada smo aranžirali nove pjesme za album, bilo važno napraviti bolje refrene, bolje pripjeve. Kada slušaš album M-16, poslušaš ga jednom ili dvaput i nikada ga ne zaboraviš. Pjesme poput **M-16**, **Marines**, **Genocide** i **Lady Injection** su stvarno klasici, znaš. I sljedeće, kada krenemo na turneju, mislim da ćemo morati svirati puno pjesama s M-16 uživo. Uvježbavali smo nove pjesme i aranžirali ih u prostoriji za probe. Imali smo puno više pjesama, pa smo uzeli samo one koje stvarno volimo. A loše pjesme ne stavljamo na novi album.

Prije dva mjeseca intervjuirao sam Millea Petrozzzu i rekao mi je da ćete ići na turneju zajedno – tri najbolja njemačka thrash metal benda svih vremena: Destruction, Sodom i Kreator. Je li to istina i što očekuješ od te turneje?

Da, to što je Mille rekao je istina. Ali moram također reći da u Njemačkoj svi pričaju o povratku thrash metala. Thrash metal se vratio. Mene to ne zanima, jer svi pričaju o povratku thrasha: ponovno okupljanje Destructiona, Schmier se vratio, Kreator snima albume koji su više thrash, žešći. Mene to ne brine, jer je Sodom jedini bend koji već 20 godina nikada nije promijenio stil, nikada nije promijenio glazbu i nikada nije razočarao fanove. Nikada nismo pokušali postati komercijalni. Mislim da je Sodom najuspješniji underground bend na svijetu. Ali ova turneja bit će velika prilika za Sodom i za svaki bend pojedinačno. Ovo je prvi put u 15 godina, ili možda prvi put ikada, da zajedno izlazimo na pozornicu na velikoj turneji. Ova turneja je posebno osmišljena za fanove u Njemačkoj, ali i u Europi. Dobivaju kartu po niskoj cijeni i mogu vidjeti tri, a možda i četiri thrash metal benda. Dobivaju stvarno snažan paket. Dobivaju 100% thrash metal na pozornici. Dobivaju punu energiju i punu snagu četiri sata. Svi će biti zadovoljni. Prije to nije bilo moguće jer u prošlosti … u redu, Mille je htio ići svojim putem s Kreatorom, Destruction je imao novog pjevača. Nikoga to nije zanimalo i nisu bili uspješni. Sada smo postali ozbiljniji. Možemo razgovarati o svemu. To je najvažnije. Schmier i Mille su moji dobri prijatelji. Možemo razgovarati o turneji. Također ćemo svaku večer mijenjati poziciju headlinera kada turneja krene. Ovo će biti stvarno ozbiljno. Ovo će definitivno biti najbolja turneja sljedeće godine.

Nadam se da ćete svirati blizu Hrvatske, možda u Sloveniji, Italiji ili Austriji. Znači li to da se turneja još uvijek planira i da još ne znate točno gdje ćete svirati?

Mislim da, ako provjeriš internetske stranice Sodoma i Kreatora, tamo možeš pronaći ažurirane i potvrđene koncerte. Mislim da je booking već završen. Krenut ćemo krajem prosinca i turneja će trajati pet tjedana. Ne znam točno gdje sviramo, još nisam vidio ažuriranje. Moram to provjeriti. Mislim da ćemo svirati diljem Europe, ali u pet tjedana ne možeš svirati posvuda. Nakon tih pet tjedana imat ćemo pauzu od dva tjedna, a možda će se turneja nastaviti u veljači

ili ožujku. Želimo svirati svugdje gdje ima ljudi. Ako je netko zainteresiran za ovaj paket, za turneju ili koncert, mi ćemo doći – to nije problem. Ali ovih pet tjedana je sada potvrđeno i mislim da nam nakon toga treba pauza.

Razgovarajmo o nečemu vrlo zanimljivom: limitiranom izdanju vašeg prethodnog albuma Code Red, koje uključuje Homage to the Gods – tribute album posvećen Sodomu kao bonus CD. Kako je došlo do toga i što misliš o njemu?
Pa, što mislim o tribute albumima… obično dolaze od diskografskih kuća kako bi zaradile novac – čisto komercijalna stvar. Tribute to Sodom album dali smo besplatno. Dobiješ dva CD-a po cijeni jednog. Ideja je došla jer me puno bendova pitalo – obradili su Sodom pjesme, uključujući velike i poznate bendove poput Cradle of Filth, Dimmu Borgir i drugih. Pitali su me da naprave Sodom obrade i htjeli su ih skupiti. Mi smo to htjeli sve sakupiti na jednom sampleru. To me stvarno veseli. Jako sam ponosan na ovaj sampler.
Puno bendova je pod velikim utjecajem i inspiracijom starog Sodom materijala. Bilo je stvarno zabavno vidjeti kako drugi bendovi sviraju Sodom pjesme. Mislim da ima stvarno dobrih pjesama, ali i nekih lošijih, ali svi bendovi su pokušali zadržati duh Sodoma iz 80-ih. I to me jako veseli. Također razmišljam o drugom tribute albumu, Tribute to Sodom, jer imamo puno drugih dobrih pjesama i puno bendova koji to žele napraviti. Ali ne želimo zaraditi novac. Samo želimo to dati besplatno fanovima koji su stvarno zainteresirani za sve vezano uz Sodom.

Budući da govorimo o tribute albumima, nedavno sam slušao Tribute to Accept, a vi ste obradili pjesmu I'm a Rebel. Možeš li nam reći nešto o tome?
Na Tribute to Accept svirali smo I'm a Rebel jer volim staru Accept glazbu, a oni su me pitali: "Hajde, moraš to napraviti." Prva stvar koju smo htjeli obraditi bila je Fast as a Shark, ali ona je već bila zauzeta, neki drugi bend ju je već obradio. Tako da je jedina pjesma koju smo mogli napraviti bila I'm a Rebel, i snimili smo je tijekom Code Red sesija, kada smo snimali posljednji Sodom album, Code Red. Bilo je stvarno zabavno za raditi. Stvarno volim Accept, ali samo stare Accept klasike. Nemam nikakav problem s time da radimo tribute bilo kojem drugom bendu koji to želi.

Pretpostavljam da je to još posebnije kad si fan glazbe benda, kao u slučaju Accepta?
Apsolutno. Mislim da je *The Restless and Wild* jedan od najboljih albuma ikada – pravi metal klasik. Mislim da postoji možda 10 ili 20 pravih metal klasika, i *Accept – The Restless and Wild* je definitivno jedan od njih. Volim Udo Dirkschneidera, ali ne volim njegov solo projekt, U.D.O. – postaje komercijalan, znaš. Svaki put kad bend pokušava postati komercijalan, meni se nikada ne sviđa, nikada više. Ali Accept je bio stvarno, stvarno težak bend, znaš, stvarno odličan bend s teškim gitarama i stvarno dobrim glazbenicima. Moji dugogodišnji favoriti? Mislim da je *Accept – The Restless and Wild* definitivno jedan od njih.

Koje druge bendove osobno voliš slušati?
Ima ih toliko puno. Prvo moram reći da mi se ne sviđaju novi metal bendovi koji izlaze svaki mjesec. U Njemačkoj izlazi stotine novih bendova. Mene to ne zanima, ne brinem se. Volim all-time klasike. Kad sam počeo slušati glazbu, počeo sam s Deep Purple, Rainbow, The Who, znaš, pravom rock glazbom. Zatim su došli New Wave Of British Heavy Metal bendovi koje sam stvarno volio. Volim Raven, Exciter iz Kanade, Venom. Također volim francuski bend Vulcain. Volim Vardis, Tank, znaš, Jaguar. Ima toliko bendova koji su me stvarno inspirirali. Mislim da su 80-e, oko '85, bile najbolje metal godine ikada, znaš. To je bilo najbolje vrijeme za mene, s toliko predivnih albuma koji su izlazili. Također volim Slayer, S.O.D. Volim ekstremno tešku glazbu. Po mom mišljenju, metal danas mora postati agresivniji, ekstremniji. Uvijek mi nedostaje duh i revolucija u glazbi, znaš. Kad sam slušao svoju glazbu, moja majka

bi ulazila u sobu – mrzila je to. Mrzila je glazbu. Sada mladi dečki čuju novi Hammerfall album, i čak se njihovim roditeljima sviđa. To je komercijalno. Mislim da metal mora više ići natrag u underground. Metal mora imati nešto posebno, znaš. Ali u Njemačkoj sada je sve previše komercijalno i preveliko. Thrash metal nikada ne postaje komercijalan. To je stvarno važno. Ali nadam se da će više fanova ponovno zainteresirati za thrash metal glazbu, možda čak i novi metal fanovi koji slušaju samo power metal, znaš. Nadam se da će više ljudi reći: "Oh, thrash metal glazba, ovo je 100% čist metal, bez ikakvih utjecaja, bez ikakvih komercijalnih stvari u njemu." To je moj san, da više ljudi voli thrash metal glazbu. Ali sada nije tako. Mislim da su u Njemačkoj pravi metal bendovi stvarno veliki, oni su najveći bendovi u metal sceni. Ali nadam se da će ljudi opet reći: "Oh, thrash metal je najbolji način za raditi metal glazbu. Stvarno je grub, stvarno ekstreman, i svidjet će nam se," znaš. To je moj san. Nadam se da kad krenemo na turneju, puno ljudi će biti zainteresirano i reći: "Hajde, idemo na Sodom, Destruction, Kreator koncert. Želim vidjeti što ovi bendovi rade na pozornici," znaš.

U redu, odmaknimo se nakratko od thrash metala, jer imaš i projekt nazvan Onkel Tom, koji je više punk-orijentiran. Što nam možeš reći o tom projektu? Kada ćeš izdati novi album i što fanovi mogu očekivati?
Da, Onkel Tom je samo sporedni projekt, znaš. Nikada ga nisi vidio uživo, ali ako nastupimo na pozornici, sviramo uživo u Njemačkoj i svi fanovi izlaze na pozornicu. Onkel Tom je posebno osmišljen za fanove, znaš. Fanovi stoje sa mnom na pozornici, piju pivo, headbanguju i pjevaju njemačke pjesme za pijane, znaš. Stvarno je zabavno raditi, nešto stvarno posebno. Ali ove godine, kada sam potpisao ugovor s SPV-om za Sodom album, nisam potpisao za Onkel Tom. Rekli su: u redu, prvo moraš dati sve ove godine za Sodom, i želim izdati novi Onkel Tom sljedeće godine, ali trenutačno nemam ugovor. Siguran sam da kad završim produkciju za novi Onkel Tom, pronaći ću ugovor, neće biti problema, znaš. Za sada se samo želim koncentrirati na novu Sodom turneju i sljedeći Sodom album, a Onkel Tom materijal ću izdati sljedeće godine. To je samo zabavan sporedni projekt i stvarno je uspješan u Njemačkoj – puno ljudi ga tamo voli.

S obzirom da nam je preostalo još vremena, opisat ću ti kako će se emisija odvijati: prvi dio će pokriti novi album i dosadašnji intervju, a drugi dio će se usredotočiti na povijest Sodoma, biografiju i prošle albume. Ako je u redu, možete li podijeliti nekoliko komentara o karijeri benda?
U redu, nema problema.

Možemo početi s ranim danima, počevši od prvog EP-a i debitantskog albuma *Obsessed by Cruelty*.
U redu, da, što mogu reći? Mislim da kada smo osnovali bend 1981. godine, tada nismo mogli ni zamisliti da ćemo dobiti ugovor s diskografskom kućom. Imali smo jedan nastup – bila je to black metal večer s Venomom i SPV, jedna od diskografskih kuća, vidjela je Sodom na pozornici. Rekli su: "Ovo je najgori, najglasniji bend koji smo ikada vidjeli," pa smo dobili ugovor. Tada je s nama bio Blasphemer na gitari, Witchhunter na bubnjevima i Aggressor. Aggressor je napustio bend, pa smo morali pronaći drugog i pronašli smo Destructora da snimimo album *Obsessed by Cruelty*. Ali nakon toga, neki od gitarista otišli su u Kreator, uključujući Destructora. Tada smo pronašli Franka Blackfirea i to je bio prvi put da smo imali stvarno dobrog gitarista. To je bio prvi veliki korak u novu eru Sodoma, počevši s *Expurse of Sodomy* i full-length *Persecution Mania*. To je bio prvi "pravi" Sodom album za mene. Također smo promijenili tekstove iz black metal stila u normalne teme – politika, rat i slično. Nakon toga se nastavilo, a u ovom desetljeću važno je reći da je izašao *Agent Orange*, jedan od

najuspješnijih Sodom albuma na svijetu. Za mene to nije bio najbolji album, ali je bio pravi album u pravo vrijeme.

To su bile osamdesete. Zatim 1990. izlazi *Better Off Dead*, još jedan odličan album, nakon njega *Tapping the Vein* i *Get What You Deserve*. Mislim da je *Get What You Deserve* vrlo neobičan album s puno kratkih pjesama.

Mislim da je *Better Off Dead* bio stvarno dobar album s Michaelom Hoffmannom na gitari, a on je bio stvarno *heavy* gitarist. Sviđaju mi se pjesme poput "An Eye for an Eye" i "Never Healing Wound", pravi Sodom klasici. Tada je Hoffmann otišao u Brazil, a mi smo pronašli Andyja Bringsa. *Tapping the Vein* bio je stvarno težak album. I da, u pravu si, *Get What You Deserve* je jedan od naših najneobičnijih albuma jer je potpuno drugačijeg stila: thrash metal, ali više punkerski. Atomic Steif je bio na bubnjevima, pravi speed freak. Sviđa mi se jer je drugačiji od drugih Sodom albuma. Nešto posebno, stvarno hardcore, stvarno punk. Budući da volim punk glazbu, mislim da su *Get What You Deserve* i *The Masquerade in Blood* najteži Sodom albumi ikada. Govorim samo o studijskim, ne o live albumima. Za mene, među starijim albumima, *Get What You Deserve* je najzanimljiviji Sodom album ikada.

Nakon toga slijede Masquerade in Blood, pa *Best Of*, zatim 'Til Death Do Us Unite i *Code Red*. Uvijek ste imali punkersku stranu, što je očito, ali *Code Red* je čist thrash metal. Čak bih ga usporedio s *Agent Orange*, jednim od mojih omiljenih Sodom albuma. Možete li reći da je *Code Red* također izašao u savršenom trenutku?

Da, da. *The Masquerade in Blood* bio je samo jedan album s drugim gitaristom, Strahlijem. Za mene je *Masquerade in Blood* bio jedan od najtežih albuma ikada. Taj gitarist imao je stvarno hardcore stil, stvarno, stvarno težak album. Produkcija nije bila tako dobra, bila je stvarno loša, ali album je i dalje bio vrlo moćan. Zatim smo pronašli novi lineup s Bobbyjem i Bernemannom. 'Til Death Do Us Unite bio je tek početak; bilo je puno pjesama koje sam stvarno volio, poput "Frozen Screams", njemačke pjesme "Schwerter zu Pflugscharen", također punkerske pjesme poput "Polytoximaniac" i "Hanging Judge", stvarno dobre pjesme, znaš. Ali *Code Red* bio je prvi korak natrag u 80-e. Puno ljudi ga je uspoređivalo s *Agent Orange*, znaš – "Sodom se vratio, više thrasherski, 80-e period se vraća." Stvarno, stvarno volim *Code Red*. To je doista težak album, znaš. Pjesme poput "What Hell Can Create", "Tombstone" i "The Vice of Killing" su stvarno moćni, pravi live klasici koje moramo stalno svirati. A sada, na *M-16*, dobivaš mješavinu svega, stvarno moćne pjesme, ali i stvarno dobre stvari. To je jako važno. Kada slušaš pjesme na *M-16* jednom ili dvaput, nikada ih ne zaboraviš. Pjesme poput "Napalm in the Morning", "Marines", "M-16" ili "Genocide" su one koje čuješ jednom i nikada ne zaboravljaš. One će također postati live klasici. Za mene je *M-16* najbolji album u glazbenom smislu. Nije najteži album, ali je najbolji album koji smo napravili u karijeri.

Što možemo očekivati od Sodoma u budućnosti?

Ne mogu ti još puno reći. Već imamo nekoliko završenih pjesama za sljedeći album, ali ne mogu previše pričati o tome. Mislim da će biti težeg zvuka. Svaki bend uvijek kaže da će sljedeći album biti najbolji, znaš, pa ćemo vidjeti što će se dogoditi. Ali mislim da je ovaj sastav sada stvarno jak. Ostali glazbenici točno znaju što Sodom predstavlja, što je duh Sodoma, znaš. Kažu: "U redu Tom, ovo je tvoj projekt, tvoj bend, ali želimo te podržati, želimo ti pomoći, sviđa nam se glazba," pa zaista možemo surađivati. Sada smo stvarno dobri prijatelji u ovom sastavu, kao obitelj, i to znači da možemo ponovno napraviti 100% čiste thrash metal Sodom pjesme. Dakle, nemojte se bojati, ne brinite, Sodom nikada ne postaje komercijalan. Sodom uvijek pokušava napraviti bolje pjesme na iskren način. Zato se molim pripremite za sljedeći Sodom album.

Hvala ti puno na vremenu i ovom intervjuu. Za kraj, možete li podijeliti poruku za fanove Sodoma u Hrvatskoj?
Nema posebne poruke, ali nadam se da ćete uživati u novom albumu i da nećete biti razočarani. Stvarno se nadam da ćete doći vidjeti nas na turneji, na koncertu, i podržati nas – to je moj san, znaš. Jako se veselim, i iskreno sam malo nervozan što ću ponovno stati na pozornicu, ali znam da fanovi čekaju ovaj paket. Radimo sve da damo 100%, znaš, i nadam se da ćemo se vidjeti u backstageu. Moraš znati, nisam rock zvijezda – nakon koncerta pokušavam izaći van, napraviti veliku zabavu, popiti pivo s fanovima i dobro se zabaviti. Jako se veselim tome i stvarno bih bio sretan da sviramo u vašoj zemlji.